



**Washington State Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2019:
Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Trauma Care System**
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Challenge: Nearly 40 percent of all deaths from trauma occur within hours of injury, and many trauma-related deaths are preventable with timely access to an effective, organized EMS and Trauma Care System.

Washington's EMS and Trauma Care System is a coordinated system to provide appropriate and adequate care, with the goal of reducing death and disability. It strives to get the right patient to the right facility in the right amount of time. Over the past 20 years, improvements to this system have contributed to the lowest mortality rate of trauma patients involved in motor vehicle crashes in recent history -- 2.6 per 100 patients in 2017 compared to 9.7 in 1995.

Washington State collects data on the care provided by EMS and the hospital-based providers treating the patient. There are three important points of analysis:

- On-scene time: the amount of time the patient remains on the scene after the arrival of EMS
- Patient destination: whether the patient was transported to the appropriate level of trauma
- Patient outcome: whether or not the patient survived

These three criteria allow analysts and policymakers to evaluate the effectiveness of pre-hospital EMS and trauma care.

Strategies and Objectives for Positive Change:

The Washington EMS and Trauma Care System has played a strong role in traffic safety through injury prevention, emergency medical services, and trauma activities. Much of this success can be attributed to the system being built upon a diverse group of health care professionals and industry experts.

The Washington Traffic Safety Commission is a key partner of the Washington EMS and Trauma Care System. These partners and groups continue to work to address the complex political, economic, logistical, legal, and clinical issues associated with trauma care in the state.

Addressing these challenges in a collaborative approach will allow Washington to continue reducing the number of fatalities and long-term effects of trauma related to motor vehicle crashes.



What You Can Do:

- Support strategies for EMS and trauma care systems – see page 175
- Promote adequate distribution of Designated Trauma Centers across the state to ensure appropriate access to trauma care
- Support seamless communications capabilities among EMS, law enforcement, and fire services agencies through interoperability
- Support the Washington State EMS and Trauma Care System with a statewide robust pre-hospital database with standard definitions and EMS agencies reporting data